



CITY OF IDAHO FALLS

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Mayor

As we come to the end of another year and observe the many customs celebrated by various religious faiths this holiday season, let us also take the time by expressing our appreciation for all the blessings we truly have here in our community and across our nation.

There is no question that it has been a tough year economic wise. Everyone has had to tighten their belts and trim back on spending such as movies, going out to eat, or even taking a vacation—no matter how brief. It all costs money and money that many folks didn't have to spend or had to divert to other household necessities. For some, it was barely enough to just survive.

The small business sector, the economic engine which drives our economy, has had a difficult time as well and had to adjust to a leaner way of doing business by essentially doing more with less. Our region here has also felt that impact.

In today's 24/7 news cycle, we see and hear events as they occur in real time. We are bombarded by an avalanche of bad news around the clock. No wonder the average citizen's outlook on the future is bleak, by all the gloom and doom we have to digest daily.

As we spend time with family and friends, the end of the year is always a good opportunity to take stock of where we have been and which direction we want to go.

Despite all the hardships this country has endured economically, as well as having our military men and women engaged in combat overseas, we still have much to be thankful for as we close the chapter on 2010 and look ahead to what 2011 will bring in the months ahead.

Idaho Falls and the surrounding communities have weathered the economic ups and downs in much better shape than other parts of our country. That can be attributed to many factors. The Idaho National Laboratory has certainly been a stabilizing force when it comes to the economic makeup of our region. Being the regional hub of eastern Idaho for shopping, medicine, transportation, agriculture, energy, along with scientific research, has definitely provided a crucial safety net as well.

Another positive attribute is our western heritage comprised of rugged individualism and taking care of our own—neighbor help neighbor—what I've referred to as "*The Spirit of Idaho Falls.*" Yes, we've all sacrificed, and some more than others. But at the end of the day, our local citizens roll up their sleeves, take a deep breath, and say to themselves "You know, it isn't so bad....it could be worse!" When you look around and witness what else is going on around the world, you can easily conclude that we are certainly better off than anyone else as a nation. After all, we are still the envy of the world and despite what we've been through as a country, the resilience of our economy still marches forward and the sheer determination—as a people—to never give up, is what has endured our Republic for over 234 years.

Locally, we have seen the positive economic indicators which this summer's tourism figures produced, such as our higher hotel occupancy numbers, along with what large events as the Blue Angels Air Show contributed as well to our area. Factor in that many of our local citizens also stayed closer to home to enjoy the many scenic and natural wonders our region has to offer—have all combined to significantly benefit our local economy. For many of our small businesses which have also struggled, these positive numbers have made all the difference between having to close or stay open.

As 2010 comes to a close, that “*Spirit of Idaho Falls*” is alive and well, and shining even brighter today—because this community always steps up to the plate, especially to help those in need. In this season of giving, this community truly gives with all its heart.

With that spirit firmly ingrained as one of our community's core values, we have nothing to fear as we march towards 2011. After all, we are all Americans—we don't give up. We are not quitters. We are doers! And Idaho Falls is but a small portion of that magnificent mosaic pattern, which makes up the United States of America.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to All!